

# NRCS NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service  
375 Jackson Street • Suite 600 St. Paul, MN 55101-1854 • (651) 602-7900  
Web: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

---

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: October 29, 2007

### **Contact:**

[Julie MacSwain](#), State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), an Opportunity for Beginning Farmers**

**St. Paul, MN-** Beginning farmers, generally defined as those having farmed 10 years or less, will be eligible for higher payment rates for installing conservation practices under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Minnesota in 2008, according to the Minnesota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Participants eligible as Beginning Farmers, who submit high priority applications that are accepted for funding, will receive significantly higher payments. The intent of the higher funding level program is to enable beginning farmers and ranchers to maintain and develop economic viability in their farm operations.

A Beginning Farmer is defined by USDA as someone who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years and who substantially participates in the farm operation. In the case of joint operations or entities, all members of the operation must meet both qualifying aspects in order to qualify as a beginning farmer.

EQIP serves as the primary tool for landowners who want to apply soil and water conservation practices and provides both technical assistance and financial assistance for agricultural producers.

A scoring and ranking period is currently underway in Minnesota counties for EQIP, with applications on-hand as of November 30, 2007, to be considered for funding.

To find out more about EQIP in Minnesota, contact your local NRCS field office or please visit the MN NRCS website: [www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov)

#

*Helping People Help the Land*

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer